



**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

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Qs & As

August 18, 2003

CARES Commission Hearings

What is the CARES Commission role?

The CARES Commission is an independent commission chartered with the responsibility to provide the Secretary with recommendations on the Under Secretary for Health's Draft National CARES Plan. The Commission may accept, modify or reject the recommendations in this draft plan. In making its recommendations, the Commission will consider information gained through site visits, written comments from all stakeholders and public hearings.

How were witnesses selected to present oral testimony to the CARES Commission?

Due to the volume of interest in this process, the Commission is seeking oral testimony from Veterans Service Organizations, employee organizations, state and local community representatives, academic affiliates, involved governmental officials, and organizations with collaborative relationships (such as DOD, VBA, or NCA). Other groups with an interest/involvement in the CARES process at the VISN level, such as historical societies with an interest in VA property, were also sought. The Commission worked with the VISNs to identify potential witnesses. When appropriate, the Commission also requested witness nominations from national organizations' offices. Others with interests in this process are provided alternative methods to provide comments to the Commission.

How can other stakeholders or individuals provide written testimony?

During any hearing, individuals may submit comments by completing blank forms and providing them to the designated official. They may also submit comments electronically at designated locations near the hearing room. Within ten calendar days after a hearing, individuals can submit written comments on issues raised during the hearing. In addition, comments may be submitted on the Draft National CARES Plan until October 7, 2003, during the 60-day period after its publication in the Federal Register.

Comments on issues raised during a hearing or the draft plan may be submitted by fax at (202) 501-2196, through the Commission web site at www.carescommission@va.gov or by writing [Marked "Comments"] to:

Richard E. Larson, Executive Director
CARES Commission
Department of Veteran Affairs (00CARES)
810 Vermont Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20420.

How can individuals provide comments to the Commissioners at hearings?

VISNs will supply computer(s) and computer operator(s) so that comments can be electronically transmitted to the Commission. Blank forms will also be available at the hearings for those who want to write their comments. Individuals also can send comments to Web, fax number or mailing address shown above.

Will written comments be reviewed by the Commission and considered in its deliberations?

Yes. Written comments will be reviewed and will have a bearing on the Commission's deliberations.

Will written comments be recorded as part of the public record subject to the FOIA?

Comments will be maintained as part of the public record of the Commission and are subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

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